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Land-based closed containment salmon aquaculture report released

(Port McNeill; British Columbia; May 5th, 2010) The SOS Marine Conservation Foundation (SOS Foundation) has released a technology report concluding that land-based closed containment salmon aquaculture is technically and economically feasible.

The Report, entitled "Technologies for Viable Salmon Aquaculture", has been extensively reviewed by aquaculture experts and will remain in the public domain (see www.saveoursalmon.ca). It was recently presented at the Simon Fraser University workshop on land-based closed containment salmon aquaculture and is another step towards the SOS Foundation's goal of helping to establish B.C. as a leader in a globally renowned, stable and viable finfish aquaculture industry.

The technology report was prepared by Dr. Andrew S. Wright as part of the SOS Foundation's strategy to support research and to produce educational materials that increase understanding of the ecosystem and methods of protecting and conserving it.

Dr. Wright's research confirms that all components required to build a full recirculation land-based closed containment salmon farm are available as commercial off-the-shelf items.

Specifics are provided for a facility that would yield 1,000 metric tons (MT) of full-grown fish and a supplementary 500 to 750 MT of early harvest fish annually. Atlantic or Pacific salmon species could be produced.

The Report provides conservative economic forecasts with the acknowledgement that refinement of the design would allow for substantial reductions in both capital and operating expenses. The 1,000 MT full recirculation land-based closed containment farm is estimated to require an investment of approximately $12 million dollars. Final income after costs would range between $5 million and $13 million dollars annually dependent upon harvest strategies.

The farm design, being comprised of ten isolated modules, allows for optimization of growth conditions for each life stage of the fish and protection from total production loss in the event of disease outbreak. By controlling temperature, it is anticipated that the grow-out period could be reduced from the 18 to 22 months for salmon currently being raised in open net-cage facilities.

Further financial opportunities are identified. The module design allows for ready incorporation of additional cash crops and energy-saving methods. As a closed system, the waste is captured as a resource that can be used for energy and fertilizer. If the salmon are grown in fresh water, as supported by the farm design, the nutrient-rich wastewater allows for the production of crops such as lettuce or tomatoes. This application of aquaponics offers a valuable secondary revenue stream.

Building on the positive findings of the Report, the SOS Foundation is working with the 'Namgis First Nation to establish a land-based closed containment pilot project in the area of Northern Vancouver Island, B.C. The project is currently at the technical design stage.

The SOS Foundation gratefully acknowledges the financial contributions made towards the preparation of this technology report by Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the British Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Lands in partnership with the Investment Agriculture Foundation.

The SOS Marine Conservation Foundation is a broad coalition of Western Canadians committed to working collaboratively and innovatively with the Federal and B.C. Governments to resolve marine conservation challenges.

To schedule media interviews, contact: Don Huff, Penasi Communication / Environmental Communication Options, at 416-972-7404 (cell) 416-805-7720 or email huffd@huffstrategy.com